

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ACYPL JOURNALIST DELEGATION

REF: MOSCOW 15939

1. SECOND DELEGATION OF YOUNG JOURNALISTS TO VISIT USSR
ON ACYPL-CYP EXCHANGE PROGRAM DEPARTED MOSCOW NOVEMBER 22.
REPORTS ON HIGHLIGHTS OF VISIT FOLLOW IN SEP MESSAGES.

2. FINAL EVALUATION SESSION WITH CYO HELD EVENING OF
NOVEMBER 21. FOLLOWING WERE MAIN POINTS OF CRITICISM FROM
AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS:

A) TOO MUCH TIME SPENT IN SOVIET BRIEFING SESSIONS; THERE-
FORE,

B) NOT ENOUGH TIME SPENT TALKING WITH INDIVIDUALS; THERE-
FORE,

C) NOT ENOUGH TIME TO PURSUE SUBJECTS IN DEPTH;

D) TOO MUCH TIME SPENT IN FORMAL DINING (MANY COURSES,
TOASTS, ETCLV

E) NOT ENOUGH FREE TIME;

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F) NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION ON PROGRAM IN ADVANCE;

G) PROGRAM NOT FLEXIBLE;

H) TOO MUCH TIME SPENT IN MOSCOW.

3. CYO RESPONSE COUCHED IN GENERAL TERMS OF DESIRE TO CONTINUE PROGRAM SO LONG AS IT "CONTRIBUTES TO DETENTE". REFERENCE MADE TO ACYPL AND US EMBASSY AS ORGANIZATION "RESPONSIBLE" FOR PARTICIPANTS.

4. CYO OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT TRIP HAD COMPLAINED TO ACYPL AND EMBASSY OFFICIALS ABOUT "IRRESPONSIBILITY" OF GROUP. SEVERAL THINGS IRRITATED SOVIET ORGANIZERS: SHARP QUESTIONS CONTINUALLY ASKED ABOUT PRESS FREEDOM, SAKHAROV AND IMPLEMENTATION OF "BASKET III". ALSO GROUP WAS BRANDED "UNDISCIPLINED" FOR FREQUENT DEMANDS TO DEVIATE FROM TIGHTLY ORGANIZED PROGRAM. CYO MAINTAINED THAT LOCAL HOSTS WERE "INSULTED" BY DEMANDS FOR PROGRAM CHANGES. LITTLE WAS SAID DIRECTLY ABOUT FACT THAT SOME JOURNALISTS WERE MEETING WITH DISSIDENTS AND REFUSENIKS.

5. EMBASSY AND ACYPL TOLD SOVIETS THAT JOURNALISTS WERE INDIVIDUALS WHO WOULD NEVER ACCEPT INSTRUCTIONS AS "OFFICIAL DELEGATION" FROM EITHER SOVIETS OR AMERICANS. ARGUMENT MADE THAT ON BALANCE, US FELT BOTH SIDES WOULD BENEFIT FROM OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE FIRST-HAND OBSERVATIONS AND THAT LESS RESTRICTIONS WOULD PAY OFF IN LONG-RUN.

6. EMBASSY ASSESSMENT, SHARED WITH ACYPL BUT NOT WITH SOVIETS, IS THAT "JOURNALISTS" WERE MIXED BAG BOTH IN ABILITY AND BEHAVIOR. PREPARATION FOR TRIP RANGED FROM VERY GOOD TO NIL; ABILITY TO OPERATE IN SOVIET CONTEXT RANGED FROM QUICK ADJUSTMENT INTO EFFECTIVE DISCUSSANTS TO LAPSES INTO SILENT FRUSTRATION; DESIRES TO GO BEYOND OFFICIAL PROGRAMS WERE HANDLED WITH SKILL BY SOME AND CRUDENESS BY OTHERS.

7. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT, DESPITE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OF CYO OFFICIALS AT LOWER LEVELS, THE WORD IS OUT TO CONTINUE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXCHANGES IN THE NAME OF "DETENTE". SOVIET OFFICIALS, IN OFT-REPEATED ASIDES, SAID FUTURE OF PROGRAM DEPENDED ON HOW JOURNALISTS WROTE ABOUT EXPERIENCES. IF SAKHAROV TAKES ALL THE HEADLINES, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOVIETS WOULD EXPRESS IRE BY CANCELLING FURTHER JOURNALIST EXCHANGES.

8. IF PROGRAM TO CONTINUE - AND EMBASSY ENDORSES GENERAL CONCEPT OF SEPARATE JOURNALIST AND POLITICIANS GROUPS - SEVERAL

SUGGESTIONS ARE OFFERED BASED ON MOST RECENT EXPERIENCES:

A) SMALLER GROUPS ARE PREFERABLE - BOTH BECAUSE THAT WOULD

MAKE SELECTION PROCESS EASIER, AND BECAUSE DISCUSSION FORMAT
IS MUCH BETTER WITH SMALLER NUMBERS;

B) SPECIFIC INTEREST GROUPS MIGHT BE CONSIDERED; FOR
EXAMPLE, AGRICULTURAL JOURNALISTS, ECONOMIC WRITERS, URBAN
SPECIALISTS, ETC., IN ORDER TO FOCUS MORE ON CERTAIN AREAS
OF INTEREST.

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